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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [PHUM](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: TURKEY: MORE ARRESTED IN ERGENEKON INVESTIGATION;
ALLEGED NETWORK MAPPED OUT

REF: A. ISTANBUL 505
[1](#)B. ISTANBUL 499
[1](#)C. ANKARA 1217

Classified By: DCM Doug Silliman for reason 1.4 (b and d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: As many as 17 more suspects were detained on September 23 in the latest round of police action in the investigation of the alleged anti-government Ergenekon organization. Detainees included a former Istanbul district mayor, a former senior police official, a prominent journalist, and a retired Army prosecutor. A chart portraying an elaborate organization of the alleged network prepared by the prosecutor was leaked to the press. A retired military attorney told us that extreme political frustrations of Kemalist "patriots" since the ascendancy of the AK Party make the Ergenekon network plausible, but the prosecution must address the defense's likely challenge on the legality of how it obtained its evidence. Retired General Riza Kucukoglu acknowledged that there was probably to some of the cases and said the military does not support any entities that might undermine its chain of command. As the waves of arrests continue in the Ergenekon case, the secular media will increasingly pressure the government to present solid evidence against suspects already indicted, and to indict those who remain in detention without charges. Court hearings in the case are scheduled to begin October 20 in Istanbul. End Summary

MORE ARRESTS

[1](#)2. (U) According to inconsistent press reports, the eighth and latest wave of detentions included Gurbuz Capan, former mayor of Istanbul's Esenyurt district; Adil Serdar Sacan, senior police official and founder of the Istanbul police organized crime unit; Tuncay Ozkan, founder of Kanalturk TV and outspoken critic of the AKP; and Tanju Guvendiren, a retired Army colonel who was a prosecutor for the State Security Court and a member of the Military Court of Appeals. Sacan was reportedly charged with hushing up the Ergenekon investigation and destroying evidence. Retired Col. Guvendiren was charged with blocking legal suits and blackmailing a former State Security Court prosecutor. Tuncay Ozkan and his group allegedly represent Ergenekon's media wing. A total of about 150 people have reportedly been taken into custody in connection with the investigation.

[1](#)3. (U) Retired four-star Army General Sener Eruygur, imprisoned since July 1, 2008, was released by the court on health grounds September 22 after he reportedly suffered a cerebral hemorrhage while in custody. According to press reports, General Eruygur fell down a flight of stairs,

incurring a head injury which caused the brain hemorrhage. On July 23 he was reported to be in critical condition in an Istanbul hospital. The court barred his travel outside of Turkey.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

¶4. (U) The prosecutor conducting the Ergenekon investigation mapped out and submitted to the court what he believed is the organizational structure of the clandestine network. The prosecutor's chart, published by the mainstream Sabah newspaper on September 21, lays out the alleged roles of a number of the suspects in the case. According to the chart, the military-like units in the organization include: intelligence, operations, finance, "intra-organization research," and "theory design and planning." The number two person in the organization is alleged to be Fikret Emek, a retired Special Forces major and currently under arrest.

¶5. (U) In addition to the alleged Ergenekon command structure, the prosecutor's chart shows five organized suicide teams, which allegedly report to retired military officers Major General Veli Kucuk and Army Captain Muzaffer Tekin who were arrested in January. Kucuk and Tekin are portrayed in media accounts as facilitating communication between civilian and military members of the organization.

"ERGENEKON PLAUSIBLE, BUT INVESTIGATION POLITICAL"

¶6. (C) The political frustrations faced by secular Kemalists

"patriots" since the ascendancy of the governing AK Party to power in 2002 make a criminal network such as Ergenekon plausible, according to the Center for Eurasian Strategic Studies (ASAM) International Law Advisor and former military lawyer Sadi Cayci. Reserving judgment on the merit of specific charges, Cayci outlined a scenario in which the threat to the secular Turkish state from political Islam as perceived by a number of secular nationalists is such that the objective of defeating this threat justifies extralegal means in their minds. Unlike the two decades following the 1980 military coup in which secularism predominated, he said, the secular-military establishment is clearly seen today to be in the back-seat, while the AKP and Gulenists are the leading elements of current domestic politics. The degeneration of Kemal Ataturk's party, the opposition CHP, has left the secularists no legitimate political voice and little choice but to seek other means to defend the state.

¶7. (C) According to Cayci, in court the defense will almost certainly question the prosecution's method's of obtaining evidence. However, Cayci and other critics of the AKP maintain that the government is less interested in convictions per se than it is with intimidating its most potent foes. In Cayci's view, while the existence of Ergenekon may be plausible, the investigative process has clear political motives intended to threaten the governing party's Kemalist opponents. Others speculate that the stepped-up intensity of arrests may also be designed distract from the on-going Deniz Feneri dispute in which Prime Minister Erdogan has been linked to illicit financial transfers. CHP MP Ceytin Soyal was adamant to us that Ergenekon was being used as a smokescreen.

¶8. (C) Riza Kucukoglu, a retired two-star general heading the Retired Officers Association and long-time friend of Turkish General Staff (TGS) Chief General Basbug, acknowledged that there was probably substance to at least some of the cases against Ergenekon defendants. He said that the military would not support any entities which might undermine its chain of command, would support transparent investigations and, if supported by objective evidence, prosecutions. Referring to the visit of Lieutenant General Galip Mendi to the two imprisoned retired four-star generals on September 2, Kucukoglu said the military was trying to show loyalty to two

senior officers who had given decades of service to the country. He noted that Mendi did not visit Kucuk, who was also held at the same prison. Kucukoglu explained that TGS was making a distinction between those who had been charged and those who had not. In so doing, argues Kucukoglu, TGS is sending a signal to the government that it could not indefinitely detain individuals without pressing charges.

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